

REMARKS

At the outset, it might be noted that there seems to be some question as to the number of claims present in the case. The Office Action Summary lists claims 1-7. The requirement for restriction lists claims 1-9.

Actually, there were at the time of the first Official Action ten claims in the case, numbered 1-10, so now there are 12. See the Preliminary Amendment of September 11, 2003, to which the present amendment adds claims 11 and 12.

Responsive to the requirement for restriction, applicants elect Group I, claims 1-6, drawn to the sealing membrane, with traverse.

It is believed that the requirement cannot properly be repeated against the claims now in the case, for the following reasons:

1. New claims 11 and 12 are linking claims, drawn to the sealing membrane but exactly co-extensive in scope with the method claims 7 and 8 from which they respectively depend.

2. Linking claims 11 and 12, like claims 1-6, are drawn to the sealing membrane and hence are indivisible from claims 1-6.

3. There is thus not even one-way distinctness between the groups of claims, much less two-way distinctness.

For the above reasons, therefore, it is believed that an action should be given on the merits of all the calism now in the case, and such is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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